

Message Text

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13-12
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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O 211131Z NOV 75
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4646

S E C R E T BANGKOK 24619

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TH, US
SUBJECT: THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI'S MEETING WITH THE
SECRETARY NOVEMBER 26

REF: BANGKOK 24535

1. ON NOVEMBER 21 THE AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY THE
DCM, SPENT AN HOUR WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI DIS-
CUSSING CHATCHAI'S NOVEMBER 26 MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY.
ALSO PRESENT ON THE THAI SIDE WERE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR
POLITICAL AFFAIRS KOSON SINTHAWANON AND DIRECTOR FOR
AMERICAN AFFAIRS WARAPHUT CHAIYANAM, BOTH OF WHOM WILL
ACCOMPANY CHATCHAI. DURING THE DISCUSSION CHATCHAI
MENTIONED FIVE SUBJECTS HE PLANNED TO RAISE WITH THE
SECRETARY.

A. SITUATION IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA.

IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE WE ARE REPORTING CHAT-
CHAI'S VIEWS ON THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEW
COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS IN GREATER DETAIL. BRIEFLY, HE
IS DELIGHTED WITH HIS RECENT TALKS WITH THE CAMBODIAN
DEPUTY PREMIER AND BELIEVES THAT, FOR ITS OWN REASONS,
CAMBODIA WILL SOON BE WILLING TO OPEN ITS BORDER AND
NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THAILAND. BY CONTRAST, HE
FEELS THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND NORTH VIETNAM ARE
ENCOURAGING LAOS TO ADOPT AN AGGRESSIVE POLICY TOWARD

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THAILAND; HE IS SEEKING WAYS TO COUNTER THESE

PRESSURES. HE WILL WANT TO BRIEF THE SECRETARY ON THIS SITUATION AND SEEK THE SECRETARY'S VIEWS ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT CHINA MIGHT HAVE WAYS OF COUNTERING THE PRESENT AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE OF VIETIANE AND HANOI. HE WILL PROBABLY ALSO ADVANCE HIS VIEW THAT THE U.S. SHOULD BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN DEALING WITH CAMBODIA IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE MODERATE TENDENCIES WITHIN THE CAMBODIAN LEADERSHIP.

B. U.S. POLICY TOWARD SEA.

RELATED TO THE ABOVE, CHATCHAI SAID HE WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE HEARING THE SECRETARY'S VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA AS WELL AS U.S. INTERESTS IN AND POLICY TOWARD THE REGION. (HE WILL EXPECT SOME MENTION OF OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THAILAND IN PARTICULAR. ALTHOUGH CHATCHAI WAS VERY FORTHCOMING TODAY, THE THAI WILL BE STRONGLY INFLUENCED IN MAKING FINAL DECISIONS REGARDING OUR RESIDUAL PRESENCE BY THEIR PERCEPTION OF OUR POLICY TOWARD SOUTHEAST ASIA AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO ASSIST THAILAND.)

C. CHINA'S ROLE IN SEA.

CHATCHAI NOTED THAT HE WOULD BE SEEING THE SECRETARY LITERALLY ON THE EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE FOR PEKING, AND HE VERY MUCH WANTED THE BENEFIT OF THE SECRETARY'S VIEWS ON CHINA'S INTENTIONS IN THIS AREA, THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PRC MIGHT BE ABLE TO RESTRAIN HANOI, AND WAYS IN WHICH THE U.S. AND THAILAND COULD ENCOURAGE CHINA TO PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE.

D. MILITARY AID

CHATCHAI SAID HE ALSO WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH THE SECRETARY THE NEED FOR EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT FOR THE THAI ARMED FORCES, A NEED WHICH HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY CURRENT DIFFICULTIES WITH LAOS. CHATCHAI SAID THE THAI NEEDED SUPPORT FOR 18 EXISTING BATTALIONS (16

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ARMY AND 2 MARINE) TO BUILD THESE UP TO FULL STRENGTH. CHATCHAI PROMISED THAT THE THAI WOULD PROVIDE THE MANPOWER AND WOULD BRING THESE UNITS UP TO FULL STRENGTH BUT THEY NEEDED HELP WITH EQUIPMENT. THEY ALSO WANTED OUR SUPPORT IN DEVELOPING GREATER SELF SUFFICIENCY IN THE PRODUCTION OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION, PARTICULARLY 81 AND 60 MM MORTAR SHELLS, HAND GRENADES AND 105 MM HOWITZER SHELLS. BRANDISHING A PAPER

OBVIOUSLY PREPARED BY THE AIR FORCE, CHATCHAI SAID THE RTAF WANTED A SQUADRON OF F5E'S AND THREE SQUADRONS OF OV-10'S. WE BELIEVE WE DAMPENED HIS ENTHUSIASM FOR F5E'S BUT EXPECT HIM TO MAKE A STRONG PITCH IN WASHINGTON FOR US TO LEAVE IN THAILAND AT LEAST A PORTION OF THE OV-10'S WE NOW HAVE HERE. CHATCHAI'S COMMENTS ON MAP ARE DISCUSSED MORE FULLY IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE. WE RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE OV-10 REQUEST BUT BELIEVE LEAVING A SQUADRON WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY SERVE OUR INTERESTS IF IT CAN BE WORKED.

E. U-2'S.

THE AMBASSADOR BRIEFED CHATCHAI ONCE AGAIN ON THE IMPORTANCE OF U-2'S TO SUPPORT INTELLIGENCE GATHERING OPERATIONS IMPORTANT TO BOTH THAILAND AND THE U.S. CHATCHAI MADE NO COMMITMENT BUT SAID HE WANTED TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THE SECRETARY. WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO24619
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750406-0198
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751122/aaaaatag.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 BANGKOK 24535
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <24 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THAI FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI'S MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY NOVEMBER 26
TAGS: PFOR, TH, US, LA, CB, (CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006